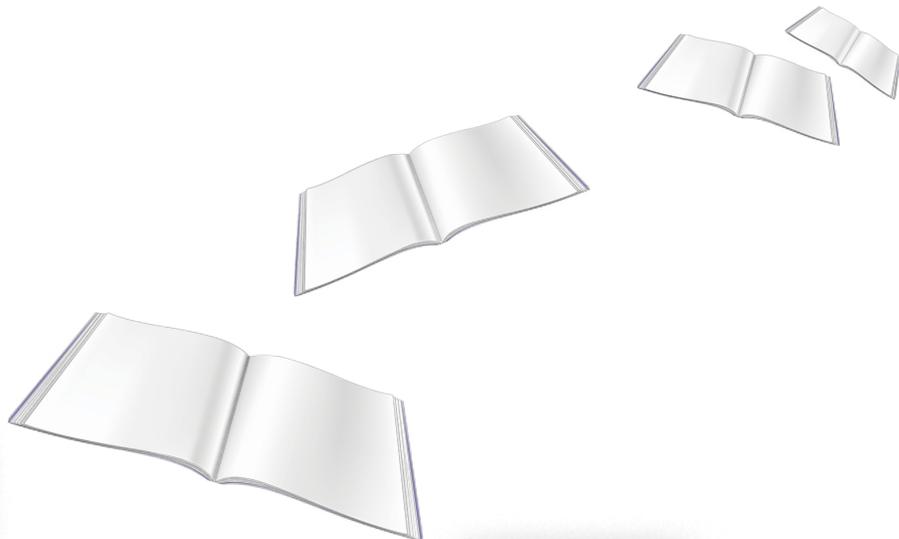


Abbotsford
**Community
& services**



STORIES

A large, white, open book is positioned at the bottom of the word 'STORIES', appearing to rest on the letters 'O' and 'R'. The book is open to two blank white pages.

of People Helping People



OUR MISSION

Abbotsford Community Services strives to be an agency that fosters community well-being and social justice through positive action and leadership.

STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY

We are children, youth, adults and seniors.

We are of all races, all religions, all cultures, all abilities and all sexual orientation, all genders, and all economic levels.

We speak many languages.

We value diversity.

We endeavour to reflect this diversity in our volunteers, board and staff.

We respect all our neighbours and clients and extend our respect to them in all that we do.

We embrace all types of families.

Therefore, we will act to promote inclusion of all in our agency and in our community.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For an updated Message from Executive Director, Rod Santiago, visit the ACS YouTube channel and watch the 6 minute video titled: Abbotsford Community Services.

And while there, take some time to explore some of the other ACS videos to discover how and why ACS truly is an organization of People Helping People.



From newborn babies to seniors, ACS helps people of all ages.

From youth needing hope to adults struggling with addictions, ACS helps people in crisis.

From newcomers in our community to people with developmental disabilities, ACS helps people feel like they belong.

Abbotsford Community Services really is: People Helping People.

To all the staff, program participants and community partners who bravely shared their stories, this Stories of People Helping People magazine is YOUR story.

Thank You!



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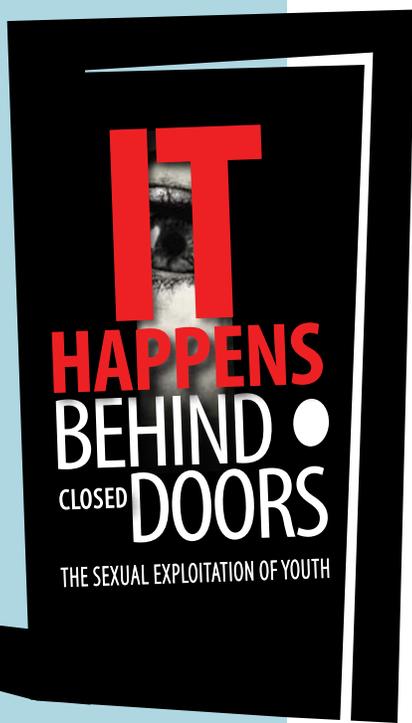
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SENIORS

FEEL WELCOME IN THE
COMPANY OF OTHERS
THEIR OWN AGE



EVERY MONDAY MORNING

for the last six years, 88 year old Lavina (left) has attended Lunch with the Bunch.

Lunch with the Bunch offers fun, food and friends for seniors every Monday from 10 AM -1 PM.

The main objective is to ensure that seniors are getting out of their homes; being socially connected and active.

I think its awesome having something like this available for mom (left). It gives her a nice break from her hovering kids," says Lavina's daughter (also named Lavina) with a laugh.

Having people my own age to talk to is important. As good as my kids are it's just not the same.

Another highlight for Lavina last year was a surprise hamper full of goodies she would never buy for herself delivered to her doorstep just before Christmas.

I was so overwhelmed I cried. I certainly wasn't expecting it. It still brings tears to her eyes months later.



THE ANNUAL PICNIC AT MILL LAKE PARK is a highlight for Lavina and for many seniors.



WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES

FOCUS ON PARENTS WITH CHILDREN 0-5 YEARS OF AGE

We offer a wide range of services to help parents build a closer connection with their children, other parents and the community.

Parents find ways to encourage children through play and have fun while making a mess in someone else's living room.

Parents build confidence in the way they manage their children's emotions through talking with facilitators and other parents.

It takes an ACS Community to raise a child!

Liz Kahle
Supervisor,
Best for Babies



THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY – View from Senior Staff

“As an agency that fosters community well-being, it is vital that ACS offer quality Early Childhood and Family Support programs so that families with children in the early years can be connected to one another and build a community rich with relationships, quality resources and accessible supports.”

Tania Rempel
Supervisor,
Family Centre–The Parenting Place

“Healthy families are the key to a healthy community and offering a wide range of services for parents and children through Abbotsford Community Services gives families support, education, and a sense of community.”

Maria Cargnelli
Supervisor,
New Beginnings and Child Care
Resource & Referral

“The needs of Abbotsford families are diverse—some desire community interaction, others are looking for support, encouragement or a referral, and there are those who just want to make a friend.”

Jeff McLean
Supervisor,
Abby Dads & Family Centre



WANT TO MAKE **INFORMED DECISIONS** ABOUT YOUR **CHILD CARE CHOICES**

Want to ensure your child care centre is offering the best, most efficient care possible?

Want to be confident your children are being well cared for when you drop them off on your way to work?



HEY,
I KNOW WHERE
YOU CAN GET HELP!

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL (CCRR)

SERVICES TO PARENTS

- Referrals to child care facilities
- Help in making informed child care choices
- Help with child care subsidy applications
- Information about community resources

SERVICES TO CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

- Parent referrals
- Support services, including home visits
- Registry for License-Not-Required child care
- Training, workshops and drop-ins
- Lending library and more

CONTACT INFORMATION

#105-32885 Ventura Avenue, Abbotsford, BC V2S 6A3
Tel: 604-850-7934 Hours: Mon - Fri 8:30 am - 4:30 pm



my
journey to
motherhood
a perinatal
depression
awakening

I was a mess. My amazing life was spinning out of control at a rapid rate. My planned pregnancy with my husband Ben was not going as I expected. This was not the happy, exciting time that I had signed up for. Things were not rainbows and lollipops.



I had heard of postpartum depression *but never perinatal depression*. I needed help but I didn't know where to turn.

What They Don't Tell You

They tell you that pregnancy is a fun time of baby kicks and wiggles, planning and showers. No one ever talks about the months of endless nausea, countless sleepless nights from insomnia, the loneliness and the pain. Oh the pain ... pelvic pain ... round ligament pain ... leg cramps ... Braxton hicks, the list goes on. And there's the perinatal depression that no one ever talks about.

Then I heard about Best for Babies when I went on-line to see what Abbotsford had to offer. I tentatively made an appointment to see what it was all about, to see if maybe there was someone who I could talk to and who would maybe be a friend or could point me in a direction to go.

They explained to me about the weekly meetings and the tangible benefits I would receive from the program.

About the gift cards for groceries or the farmer's market coupons. About the many donations of baby items that I could access.

They told me about the guest speakers from the community that could teach me about the day to day care my child would need.

And I learned about the nutrition knowledge available and the free healthy meal that would fill my belly each week. Did I need the practical support of diapers and groceries and baby clothing and weekly hot meals?

Well – yes. But that's not what kept me coming back week after week.

It was the people. The relationships. The love I felt when I asked my million and one questions about breastfeeding and birth plans and immunizations. It was that I was never judged. Never judged when I ended up in the mental health unit of the hospital because I had lost it. Never judged when I couldn't keep it together and was in tears most meetings.

I found friends; women who were in the trenches of pregnancy and uncertainty like I was. Women who became my good friends and staff who have become mentors to me on this motherhood journey. They were kind and generous in every way.

I did not fit the 'expected' demographic of someone in need of a program like this. I'm happily married and we have a reliable income and a safe and healthy home. But the truth is, I would not be the stable mother that I am today without the support at Best for Babies.



Giving Support to young Families

Providing help and support to young parents can really help in their success in the classroom as well as in their start as parents.

The New Beginnings program works with young mothers and fathers to assist them in completing their high school education, to improve their confidence and skills as parents, and to support them with a range of issues that often face young parents.

Focusing on the Important Things

Staff work directly with young mothers and fathers to help with issues such as housing, relationships, employment, and child custody.

Different types of parenting classes are offered throughout the year so that parents have a chance to understand how their child is developing and to be introduced to a variety of parenting techniques.



What a Difference a Program Makes...

The best thing for me as a student at New Beginnings was that the staff were the first people in my life to treat me like I could ever amount to something.

It changed the way I saw myself, the way I treated myself and ultimately has given me confidence to take my own dreams and goals seriously.

I would be lost without the programs provided to me by New Beginnings and Abbotsford Community Services.

Getting my high school diploma has given me a self-confidence that I have been lacking.

It also gave me hope in myself and the future. I would not have that if I had not been able to attend New Beginnings.

I've learned to focus on what is important, such as graduating and finding a career.

I've also learned to be a lot more confident in myself as a parent.



BELOW: Graduates of the New Beginnings program receive a beautiful quilt for their child hand made by members of the Abbotsford Quilter's Guild.



EMPOWERING DADS

...Changing Families

"I grew up in Victoria where I was known as an angry alcoholic. I was a father but I had no idea how to parent. The Ministry of Children and Families got involved with me, and told me I would never live with my wife or son because of my addiction.

At that point I decided to get treatment and chose Kinghaven in Abbotsford. The team at Kinghaven taught me many fundamental skills to navigate life with.

After my Kinghaven graduation I lived in a recovery house in Abbotsford. It was there that I heard about Abby Dads at Abbotsford Community Services. I attended my first Saturday morning Breakfast 'My Daddy and Me', where I found a welcoming community of dads. The facilitator Reg mentioned that an Anger Awareness group for dads was starting soon, and I thought it might be part of my next steps towards health.

I signed up and eventually attended both Level One and Two. Before I attended the group, my anger was high and I had multiple eruptions weekly. But after completing the two groups, I found I was more in control. Not those things that made me angry had disappeared, but I found myself better equipped to work through my thoughts and feelings.

Although I was feeling better about my anger, I still thought of myself as a 'shitty' parent. So when I heard about the Triple P Parenting class, I jumped at the chance to attend. I left there with lots of tools (which I call 'knacks') such as getting eye-to-eye level and within arms' reach of your child when asking them to start or stop something, communicating with my son as a human being, ignoring the little things and dwelling on the positives. I also completed the Nobody's Perfect parenting class after to ensure I was getting all the information I could to be a good dad. (I liked the Triple P class better.)

Connecting with the Abby Dads program and staff were some of the key ingredients that allowed me to finally be able to move back in with my son and partner. "I like being a family unit far better than just being alone by myself."

So with that in mind, my goal is to eventually move back to the island, get some job training, stay sober, and stay together as a family.

Abby Dads ROX!



Letters from AbbyDads Participants

"Hello, my name is David,

I attend several programs of the Abby Dads program on a regular basis. I came to know of this program when I was in desperate need. I was fighting with the Ministry (MCFD) to get my son back in my home. I had no one to turn to for support.

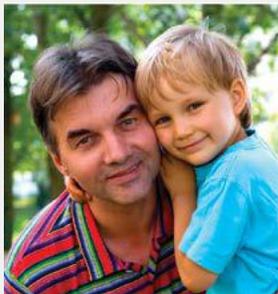
It was this program that gave me the supports and resources to help advocate for me to get my rights as a father back. It was a big help for me to have the Father Support Worker in my corner. Having someone that was a passionate father helped me to become a passionate father as well.

Even today I have overcome adversity with addiction. I have become a better father and role model. I have continued to attend Abby Dads as I feel it is still important for me to stay connected to the community, and not go backwards in my path to success.

Being connected to the community of Abby Dads has been the biggest support in helping me come out of my shell and make some other friends who were fathers as well, and dealing with some of the same life experiences.

And now all without the help of drugs or alcohol! I strongly believe this program needs to run forever as I don't know where I would be if it wasn't around.

I will always support this program."



Wife's Note:

It has been a real gift to our family seeing Russell learn to navigate and express his anger in non-destructive ways. His communications, both with our son and with me, has improved so much and has given us the ability to not only live together, but enjoy life together as a family unit."



Immigrant moms listen attentively during parenting classes

Parenting Life Skills Classes

Newcomers gain confidence and make positive connections.

Parenting in Canada is often quite different than parenting in other countries around the world. “In the Parenting Life Skills class we try to equip newcomers with our Canadian cultural ways of parenting,” says coordinator Rimple Mohindra.

In many countries spanking is a common and accepted form of discipline. In Canada that is definitely not the case. There is no open communication between parents and children, but in Canada we encourage listening and talking with your children. Many cultures have no idea what it means to have ‘family time.’

What the parents really enjoy about this opportunity is the diversity in the class and the chance to make new friends.

Of course the child minding component is very important. Without it, many of these parents would not be able to attend.

Invariably, all the attendees say that the class has given them more confidence in all aspects of parenting.

A Certificate of Completion is provided to all parents who attend the course which turned out to be invaluable to one young mother. She learned about the classes through a referral at victim services.

Because of various domestic issues her daughter was removed from the home. But after taking the classes and showing her Certificate of Completion to her social worker, she regained full custody of her little girl. She was ecstatic.



ABOUT THE CLASSES:

- For immigrant families with children 0-12 years
- Free 6-week class with child care provided.
- For more information CALL 604.217.2299

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Listening & talking with your children
- How to deal with bullying
- The importance of play
- Healthy eating, cooking and nutrition
- School readiness
- Acceptable discipline
- Physical and mental child development

“

I have gained lots of knowledge and confidence by attending Parenting Life Skills Classes.

I have also learned to openly communicate with my children and started sharing my thoughts with them.

I would especially like to thank Rimple (ACS coordinator); she is very helpful and kind.

Participant Testimonial – Sukhdeep



Q

WHAT IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF ADVICE MOHINDRA TRIES TO IMPART TO PARENTS?

}

Open communication and openly supporting their children. So many former students meet me in the community, they let me know they took the classes, they started using the strategies and as a result, things have turned out very well in their homes.

HUNGER

does not take weekends off

Reprinted with permission from the Abbotsford News and journalist Vikki Hopes. NOTE: All names have been changed in the following story in order to protect the identities of the people involved.

The Backpack Program was created in response to teachers hearing the cry of their students. Teachers were heartbroken to hear their students were coming to class Monday morning hungry, reporting that they had not eaten over the weekend.

At the start of the 2013/2014 school year the Abbotsford Rotary Club worked with the local school district to determine the scope of the need. Working together with the Abbotsford Food Bank they created what is now called the Starfish Pack Program.

Now over 200 backpacks with food are going home with students filled with three meals for each day of the weekend.



Andrea called it her “perfect life with the perfect family.”

She lived in a five-bedroom home with a fenced backyard in a quiet residential cul-de-sac. She resided with her pre-teen daughter, young son and her fiancé, Joseph.

Joseph, a personal trainer, was the family’s sole breadwinner, and this enabled Andrea to stay home and raise her kids.

There was always plenty of food in the cupboards, and the bills were always paid.

Andrea loved being a stay-at-home mom. It meant she could take part in her kids’

school functions and be there to greet them when they returned from school. It all changed Oct. 3, 2011.

Andrea awoke to find Joseph not moving beside her. Despite his apparent excellent physical condition, he had died in his sleep from a heart attack – the result of an undiagnosed heart condition.

Andrea felt like her soul had been ripped out of her. Not only did she lose the love of her life, but the emotional security he provided. Joseph had no life insurance nor were there any widow’s benefits available to Andrea. With no job to

turn to, and too consumed with grief to look for one, Andrea could not afford the rent on their home.

She and her kids moved into her parents’ residence and, although she was grateful for their support, it was a difficult step to take. She felt like she was burdening them. Andrea’s ex-husband was not providing child support, and her only immediate source of income was welfare.

Andrea was a woman of pride, strength and perseverance. It was humiliating for her to accept government

support, but she did what she had to for her kids’ sake.

In December of that year, Andrea and her kids moved into a place of their own – a subsidized housing unit that charged \$529 a month for rent. Her welfare cheque was less than \$900 a month.

Trying to make the funds last the month was never easy. At times, Andrea couldn’t afford to buy groceries, but she got by with trips to the Abbotsford Food Bank or she would go to her mom’s for dinner. She was also grateful for the assistance her kids received through their schools’ breakfast and

This backpack program is definitely a lifesaver. I really needed it. It really helps.

Photo Credit: Vikki Hopes



Photo Credit: John Morrow

lunch programs, which ran during the week.

But the weekends could be tough, and it's when the hunger pangs would creep in. Sometimes, the family had only a loaf of bread to eat.

At the start of the 2012/13 school year, Andrea's son – then in Grade 1 – came home from school with a backpack filled with food. The items included cereal, fruit, granola bars, canned items and boxed pasta.

There was also a letter, explaining a new program that was being offered and asking for Andrea's permission for her son, Jordan, to participate.

The idea was that participating kids would receive the food-filled backpacks every Friday so that they would have enough meals – two breakfasts, two

lunches and two dinners – to last them for the weekend. They would return the empty backpacks early in the week, and they would be refilled for pick-up again that Friday.

Andrea was so moved at the offer that it brought tears to her eyes. She signed the form without hesitation.

Jordan was thrilled to receive his backpack each week. It was like opening a present to see what was inside. He especially liked the treats – such as granola bars, juice boxes and pudding cups – that were too expensive for his mom to buy.

Andrea found a job in June 2013, as a cook at a local institution. She misses her kids, but she feels empowered that she is the one who supports them and she no longer requires government assistance.

She makes almost double what she did on welfare, but the \$13-an-hour job means she still struggles for the essentials. Andrea often eats her meals at work, saving the food at home for her kids. The items from the backpack program help fill the gap over the weekends, ensuring her dollars can be stretched a little bit further.

She tears up when describing the difference it has made to her family. "This backpack program is definitely a lifesaver. I really needed it. It really helps." She also hopes that her kids someday grasp the deeper message behind such forms of giving.

"I teach my kids that it doesn't matter who you are, what colour you are, what size you are ... We all need help and we need to be treated with dignity and respect."

UPDATE

What began in one school with only 10 children has now grown to over 200 children identified in 13 schools. The packs are filled each week with six meals – two breakfasts, two lunches and two dinners – to last the weekend.

Members of the Abbotsford Rotary Club heard about the need in our schools and became the first major donor to the program. Because of their enthusiasm and dedication to ensuring no child goes hungry on weekends, they have enlisted the support of many local businesses, churches, organizations and individuals to keep those backpacks filled.

Any other businesses, groups or individuals wanting to contribute to the program can do so by calling the Abbotsford Food Bank at 604-859-5749.

Five Hundred Twenty-Five

THE APPROXIMATE COST TO PROVIDE FOOD IN THE BACKPACKS FOR ONE CHILD FOR THE ENTIRE SCHOOL YEAR.

Toys 4 Tots

Inaugural event draws large crowd

The first 'Toys for Tots' event on Friday morning November 29th 2013 collected more than 900 toys and almost \$16,000 in cash for the Abbotsford Food Bank.

More than 500 people turned up for the inaugural event, which invited the public to drop off cash and/or toy donations in exchange for a free buffet breakfast.

'Toys for Tots' was held at the Ramada Plaza and Conference Centre in partnership with Envision Financial.

Food Bank Manager Dave Murray was overwhelmed by the turnout, saying organizers had expected perhaps 300 people.

"This is what makes Abbotsford special," he said as more than 500 people streamed through the doors. Many local sponsors came on board to help cover the costs so that all the proceeds could go directly to the Abbotsford Food Bank.





500
ATTENDEES

+

900
NEW TOYS

+

16,000

DONATED CASH

ONE AMAZING 1ST ANNUAL TOYS 4 TOTS FOOD BANK FUNDRAISER



Official Retirement Celebration June 2013 (Left to right) Current Executive Director: Rod Santiago / Thelma Schrock, Executive Director 2000–2010 / Social Justice Advocate Kathy Doerksen 1972-2014 / Walter Paetkau, Founder & Executive Director 1969–1999

SO·CIAL JUS·TICE:

Justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

Implies fairness and mutual obligation in society—that we are all responsible for one another, and that we should ensure that everyone has equal chances to succeed in life.

SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCATE RETIRES OR DOES SHE?

The official retirement celebration for long time ACS staff member Kathy Doerksen took place in June 2013.

But she kept coming into the office. She kept lending her years of experience to the many staff who had come to rely on her knowledge, compassionate advice and wisdom in dealing with society’s most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

That’s just who she is; it’s in her DNA to help. She embodies what ACS is: people helping people.

42 YEARS AGO

Kathy first started working with Abbotsford Community Services 42 years ago with the Community Law Office until major provincial funding cuts all but eliminated that service in 2001. After taking a short break, she came back in the summer of 2004 to cover another staff member’s sick leave. And then in 2005, she came back officially, as she says, in 2005. Whatever dates you put to it, Kathy has never really left and will always be an integral part of the organization.

Major Strengths of ACS

Kathy served the community under three different ACS executive directors as shown in the photo. And throughout those years and changes she still firmly believes that the biggest strength of the organization is that it allows and encourages staff to dream big, to look at the big picture and take risks.

“Staff are encouraged to explore and learn new things. And ACS also looks after its staff by striving to have a healthy workplace, provide the best wages and benefits and working conditions that are possible given the funding it receives.”

What Now?

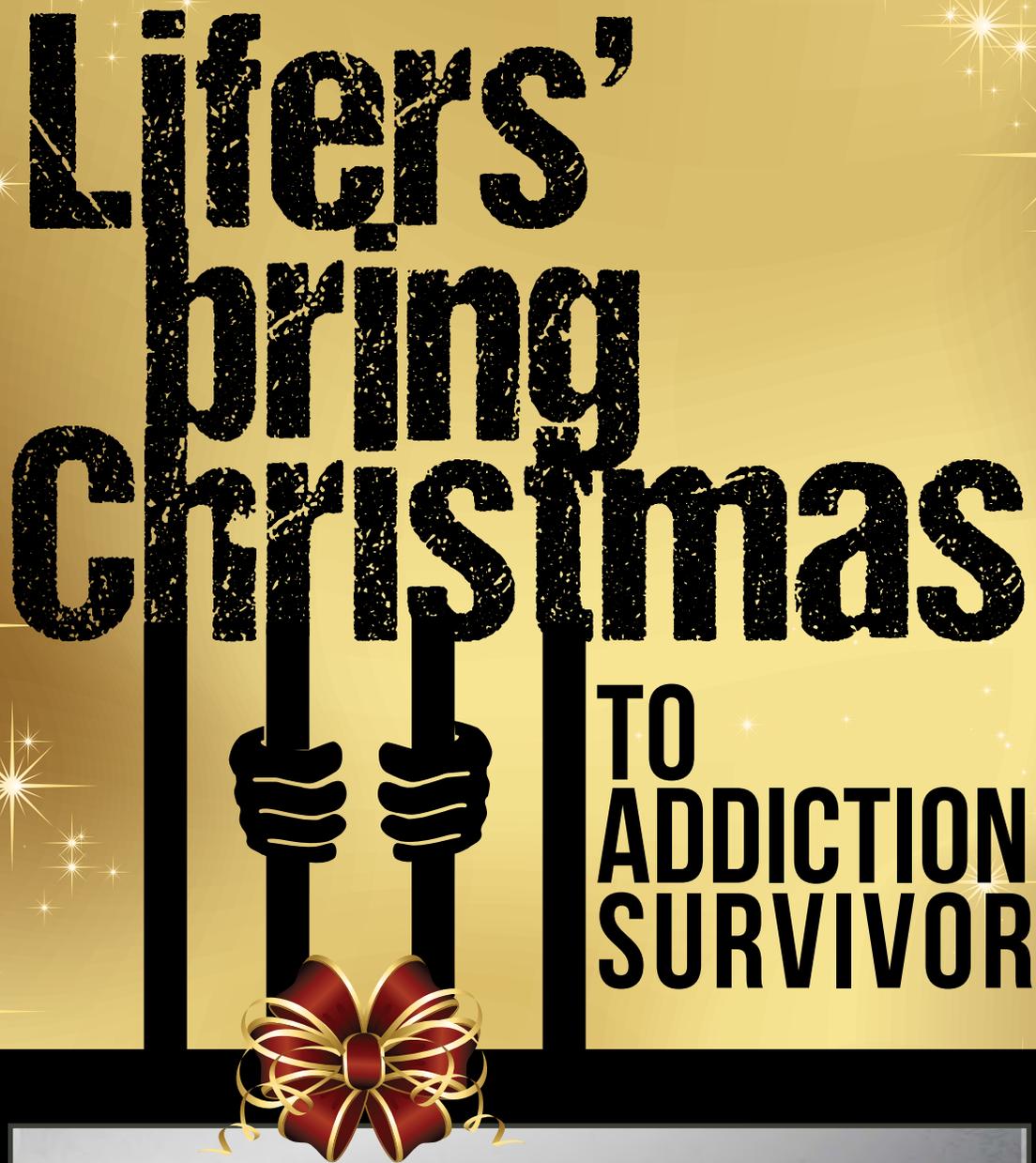
As is the case with many retirees, family has become a priority for Doerksen. Helping out with the childcare of their grandson seems to keep her and husband Zeke busy.

But she can’t quite keep away from other things that are important in life. She is currently a Team Leader with the BC Association of Community Response Networks. The organization works to empower communities and individuals to stop adult abuse and neglect. “It’s part-time of course. I guess I can’t quite seem to get away from social justice issues.”

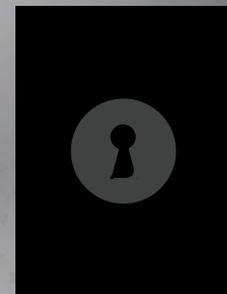


While I enjoyed every area I worked in,
I have always been most passionate
about social justice issues.

**Lifers' bring
Christmas
TO
ADDICTION
SURVIVOR**



“I can’t believe that anyone would do this for me. I am so blessed. Thank you, thank you so much,” cried Florene when a group of women came to her home bearing gifts and an amazing traditional Christmas meal for eight the morning of December 23rd, 2012.”





Front left – right: Lucy Bellavance, Florene
Back left – right: Lesley Braithwaite, Susan Underwood

Florene has experienced severe trauma in her life dating back to early childhood in a small rural town when the house she was sleeping in with her sister, brother-in-law and 6 nieces and nephews, blew up and caught fire. Five people died that early January morning and Florene was seriously burned.

Her journey through life has been difficult since then involving addictions, poverty, crime, and separation from her own six children. In recent years she has also had to battle cancer.

And then one day she walked in to the ACS Addictions Centre, dumped the drug paraphernalia from her purse out onto the table in front of Supervisor Lesley Braithwaite, and matter of factly stated: "I'm done with all this. Please help me."

And so began another chapter in Florene's life. It has not been easy. She manages to maintain a small apartment

in Abbotsford but many days there is very little food in the kitchen cupboards. She simply cannot afford groceries.

In late fall 2012 ACS was approached by two women representing the Women's Lifer's Group at the Fraser Valley Institution. Lucy Bellavance, and former ACS Board member Susan Underwood, told us that the women inmates wanted to give the gift of Christmas to someone in the community.

It was an obvious fit to match their kindness with Florene. With the money from the women's group, Bellavance and Underwood went out to buy gifts appropriate for Florene and some of her children. They had enough money left over to purchase one of the fabulous Ramada Christmas Dinners to Go. It was all delivered to an overwhelmed Florene two days before Christmas, which just happened to also be her birthday.



ACS spoke with a member of the Women's Lifers Group. Here is part of that conversation.

WOMEN'S LIFERS GROUP

Why did you do it?

"It's always important for us to give back to the community. We know our crimes have impacted our communities in a negative way. So it's important for us to now be able to impact our communities in a positive way. It is also a way for us to be able to say we're sorry."

Why adopt a stranger ?

"We understand the struggles and hardships of others and we want to do something nice for somebody and that helps to give our time in here some purpose and meaning. It's about being able to give back."

Have you done this before?

"The Women's Lifers Group has sponsored families in the community for Christmas since 2007, and for a number of years we have also sponsored families for Thanksgiving."

How do you finance this?

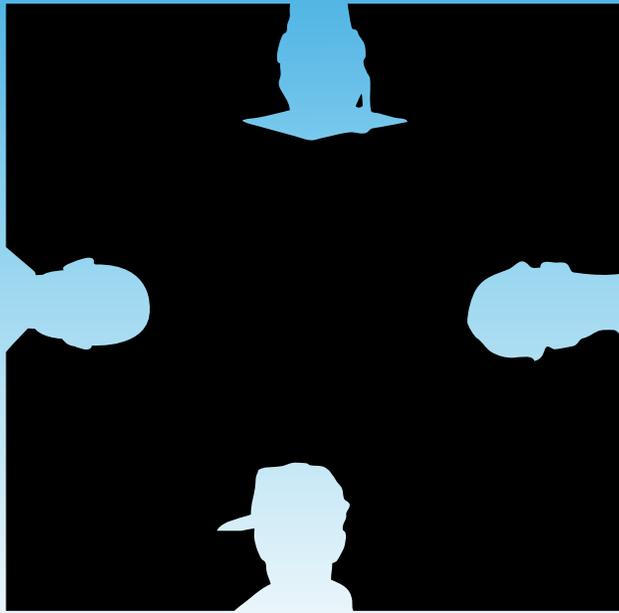
"We organize fundraisers here within the institution. For example, we make available healthy snacks for the population which they buy with their own money. The profits from that go towards the sponsorship program. We also do card sales throughout the year and that works in much the same way."

What do you want people to know about the women in the Lifer's group?

"Having dealt with our index offence we hope to be given a second chance and be welcomed back into the community upon reintegration. And we hope that we are not defined by our crimes because we are good people. As women, we do feel guilty and we are naturally inclined to nurture and to care-give. So in here we want to represent ourselves in the same way we would out in the community."

The message in this story of people helping people is simply that anyone, no matter what their circumstances, can reach out and help someone else.

ACS was honored to be the conduit between Florene and the women at the Fraser Valley Institute.



FINDING **THE** RIGHT FIT





Skilled Newcomers Get Help Solving The Puzzle

Skilled newcomers to Canada and to Abbotsford tend to be very hopeful. They arrive with their dreams, skills and experience and are often excited about being able to contribute and to be a meaningful part of our Canadian society. But do they get into a career or job that they are qualified for? Is there a fit between their qualifications and the employment they can get?

Enter, the Skills Connect for Immigrants (SCI) program offered at Abbotsford Community Services. SCI is part of the Welcome BC umbrella of services, made possible through funding from the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia. Locally, the SCI program operates as a partnership between Douglas College and Abbotsford Community Services.

The SCI program helps immigrant who do not require completely new credentials or extensive language upgrading to prepare for and obtain employment relevant to their skills and experience. The SCI program assists individuals from all industry sectors including construction, transportations, manufacturing, and healthcare to name a few.

Success of SCI Program:

Completion Rate = 80%

Employment Rate = 86%

“To build trust in international credentials and experience we have to start by at least giving them a chance to prove themselves. Allow these skilled immigrants an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and suitability,” says Svekla. “ And we need to do those things early on before they lose hope and look for survival jobs that do not use their skills and talents.”

FACT

People accessing the Skills Connect for Immigrants (SCI) program are skilled newcomers to Canada with post-secondary education and/or work experience prior to their arrival in Canada.

FACT

The biggest challenge to finding meaningful employment is recognition of their credentials and work experience. Many of our clients have a difficult time finding work because they are seen as “overqualified” for entry level jobs in their industry yet, “underqualified” for the same jobs that they were doing in their country of origin.

FACT

SCI offers:

- One-on-one meetings for career consulting
- Job search and workplace orientations
- Funding assistance for skills upgrading, evaluation fees, association and licensing fees
- Networking opportunities

FACT

The annual ‘Celebration of Success’ event “focuses on any step in the right direction towards feeling like a professional again,” comments SCI coordinator Shauna Svekla. “Success comes in all shapes and sizes and means different things for different people.”

Success for professional newcomers to Canada means:

- Gaining membership with their regulatory association
- Completing skills upgrading
- Improving English language skills
- Finding entry level transitional employment in their chosen field

How can we help ‘ease’ the immigrant experience?

- Adopt an attitude of recognition and trust for the level of work experience they bring with them
- Provide meaningful opportunities for gaining ‘Canadian’ experience and allow them to contribute their skills early in their job search
- Work experience programs
- In depth volunteer or internship opportunities
- Employer participation

THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

WITH THE SKILLS CONNECT PROGRAM

LOST WITHOUT ANGELS



Submitted by:
Harpreet Gaur
Edited for length

Lost is the best word to describe how I felt initially after immigrating. At Abbotsford Community Services there have been many angels in the area of support to new immigrants.

Moving to another country when Ajit, my husband and I were over 50 years old was not an easy decision.

Ajit told me that somewhere in his heart, he felt that God had given us another chance to prove that “We could still do it”. With all of us, my family, being well settled in their respective careers in India, it was a tough decision to make. On one side, here we were being presented with an opportunity which at one point in life we were very interested in. On the other side, did we want to

disturb the content balance of our life?

While introspecting, we realized, our lives are the sum total of our choices. We figured that Ajit would move first. One unsettled member in the family was always better than all of us unsettled. One may have been a highly skilled person “back home”. However, you need to demonstrate your skills and wait till someone recognizes that he or she needs a person of your skills. There are a very few quick fix solutions in settlement in immigration in a new country. Just remain focused to succeed.

Lost is the best word to describe how I felt initially after immigrating. I was very fortunate to have Ajit, my husband, lead me to the Angels of Abbotsford, as he likes to call them who guided him and me in each of the steps that were required to be taken. These angels work tirelessly to make this journey of settlement in a new life interesting, of learning

value and of course a challenge to accomplish.

At Abbotsford Community Services there have been many angels in the area of support to new immigrants.

In the Employment Mentors program we were encouraged to share, connect, communicate and independently handle decisions.

In the Skills Connect program, staff was continuously researching and providing information to help us find a foothold to move forward. And we were reminded to keep humour and jest in the new life intact because this journey is stressful.

In the Community Connections program I was given the opportunity to connect and volunteer and the staff were accommodating, friendly, and supportive.

Without these and many others at ACS and in the community of Abbotsford, I could not have succeeded.

Professional Status Obtained

Submitted by: Fabio Alexander Morales
Nationality: Colombian
Background: Civil Engineer



I have been in BC for three and a half years. During this time I have had the chance to work in two engineering companies where I have learned how things are carried out in the engineering field in Canada.

When I joined SCI, I was working as a civil designer in a small company with a very low wage, but I knew that something good was about to come, so I took all workshops that SCI offered, and I took advantage of the financial help for courses and books that this program also has. Approximately five months after having joined SCI, I was contacted to work in a new engineering company in a better position.

During this time my application with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geo-scientists of British Columbia (APEGBC), was in progress, so I got advice how I should take the interview with this regulatory body, and just two months before the completion of the program I have got my professional engineering status.

I would like to thank the SCI staff for their job and for helping me to achieve my goals!

Disappointment to Success

Submitted by: Jasleen from India
Background: College Instructor



I arrived in Canada in 2011 with a Master's Degree in Business Administration and over four years of experience as a College Instructor. I learned about the Skills Connect for Immigrants (SCI) program through University of the Fraser Valley.

Prior to entering the program I was unemployed and was very disappointed and often thought of going back to India. I was not getting any job here, and

could have never have understood the reason, if I wouldn't have met Shauna. (SCI coordinator)

My involvement in the program helped me in:
Resume preparation
Interview techniques
Refine my soft skills
Boosted my confidence
Gave me a positive approach and above all,
Developed faith in me that I can scale heights in this country too with continuous efforts and right direction.

A Successful Career Transition

Submitted by: Elly from Taiwan
Background: Accounting
Edited for length & simple grammar



I came to Canada in September 2012 with my family. I was an account sales representative at a networking industry but I wanted to transfer my career to another field after immigrating to Canada.

As I considered working in the health care field I also found out about the SCI program through staff at Abbotsford Community Services.

I talked with an ACI consultant and decided to take the Health Care Assistant (HCA) program as a start in Canada. During my time at SCI I learned a lot about the Canadian working culture, job market, job interview skills and how to write a resume. All of this knowledge made me feel more confident to settle down here.

After I got the HCA diploma, I researched and sent a resume to a care home to find a job according to the skills I learned from SCI. Within one month I got a job at Eden Care Home and started as a casual RCA. Five months later I received a full time offer at the same facility.

This is a meaningful job for me to start my new life here, and husband also joined the SCI program now.

Shauna was extremely supportive and helpful. Regular counseling sessions with her made me think of broader career choices for myself. She helped me to improve my understanding of cultural differences and ways to overcome those cultural differences. She boosted my confidence so much that I started applying for Government positions in my very first year and was hired by Canada Revenue Agency for a term position.

SCI helped me to get my credentials assessed where I received a Level 3 equivalency for CGA Program, BC. I am in a pool of successful candidates for placement under Federal Internship for Newcomers, which I wouldn't have been, without SCI's support.

I am extremely thankful to team of SCI for being with me in my journey of success in Canada.

DEFINING

INCLUSION



A WORLD WHERE
PEOPLE
WITH
**DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES
CAN PARTICIPATE**
IN EVERY ASPECT
OF COMMUNITY LIFE AND
**FEEL THEY
BELONG**

The importance of supporting people with developmental disabilities:

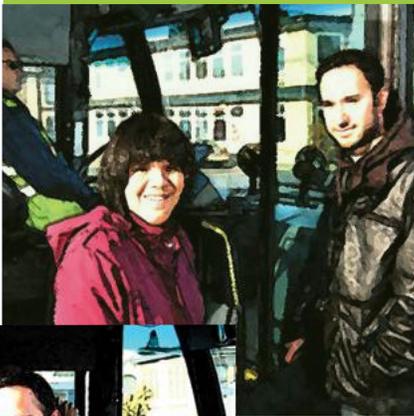
- Diversity strengthens communities
- Being included in one's community leads to a fuller and more vibrant life
- Communities are strengthened by accessing the abilities and talents of people with developmental disabilities

An inclusive community is one that:

- Allows all individuals to make their own decisions and live independently with the right supports
- Offers everyone the rights and freedoms to actively shape their own future
- Ensures unrestricted and equal access, rights, and participation in all that our society offers

The Community Living Programs which support people with developmental disabilities focus on:

- Skill building, recreation and community participation
- Supported employment services such as career exploration, education and training
- Recreational activities for youth from 6–19 years of age
- Social and recreational options for seniors



when
PEOPLE
feel like they
**BELONG
SOMEWHERE
OR TO
SOMETHING**
– like a community –
they are happy, well-adjusted
and contributing members
of society.



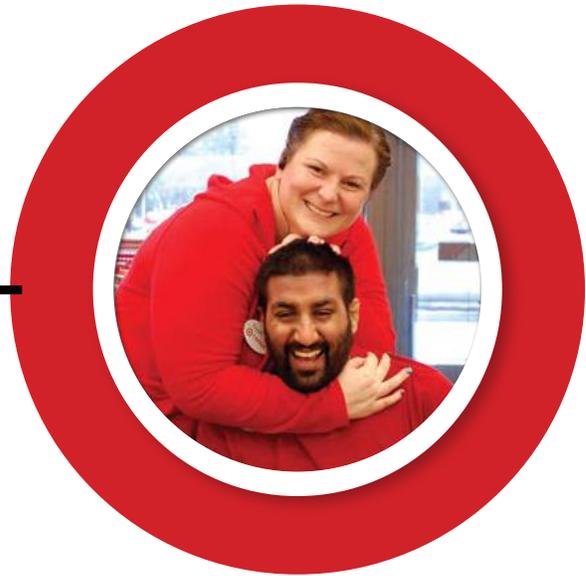
Year after year, the Abbotsford Firefighters' Charitable Society has donated funds to help send some of our Discovery Program Participants to the regional Community Living – Inclusion BC conference.



TARGETED FOR SUCCESS

...when you are able to match the right person to the right employer in the right job, all of the barriers to employment for people with developmental disabilities seem to disappear.

Submitted by:
Rick Beckett



Jamie is a 30 year old man with a developmental disability, and a job. In the fall of 2013 he was hired at the then newly opened Target store in Abbotsford. His job at Target has made a huge difference in Jamie's life and Jamie has made a substantial impact on the staff and management at Target.

In the summer of 2013, Jamie was about to complete the Employing People in Community (EPIC) program. The program helps people with developmental disabilities find employment.

Over Jamie's three years in EPIC he tried five different paid jobs but nothing stuck. In August 2013 Target held a job fair in Abbotsford to hire staff for the new store opening later in the year. Jamie went to the job fair with Rick Beckett, one of the EPIC staff to apply. In the course of one afternoon Jamie completed an application form and went through three interviews. The final interview was with Ross Pickard, the Target Store Manager.

"We will be offering you a position in a few weeks," Ross told Jamie. Jamie was very excited; the staff at Target had welcomed him in. He could not believe this was really happening. Later, when talking about the reason Jamie was chosen as a Target employee, Pickard said, "We hired Jamie because of his attitude. We can train for skills, but not for attitude. Jamie is always smiling and always positive."

Since September 2013 Jamie has been working as a Brand Associate. His duties include gathering shopping carts and baskets, cleaning the bathrooms, and keeping the front

entrance organized and tidy. Target management found that Jamie was able to do his job with little or no changes to the job description. Jamie is very focused on safety while he is on the job. Upon seeing one of his fellow staff members walking into an area Jamie had recently mopped, he shouted "Safety first, watch out for the wet floor!"

Jamie is treated the same as all of the other staff at the store. He fit in immediately with almost no job coaching by EPIC staff.

Jamie has a very positive effect on the staff in the store. According to Pickard, "Jamie's enthusiasm is infectious. I know when he is on the floor by the way the other staff are smiling or behaving."

Jamie fits perfectly in the culture at Target. "Many companies talk about diversity and inclusion but Target really lives it," commented Rick Beckett of the EPIC program. Jamie is welcomed as a valuable member of the staff and his life has improved immensely from his new friendships, his newfound confidence and a steady paycheck doesn't hurt either."

Jamie's experience at Target shows that when you are able to match the right person to the right employer in the right job, all of the barriers to employment for people with developmental disabilities seem to disappear. Target is the right employer for Jamie. With their support and encouragement he has found success.

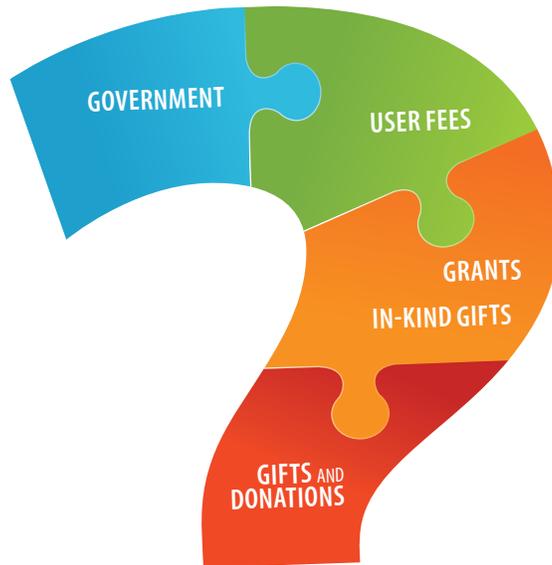


"We hired Jamie because of his attitude. We can train for skills, but not for attitude. Jamie is always smiling and always positive."

WHAT KEEPS US **GOING** YEAR AFTER YEAR



AS A LARGE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION OUR FUNDING COMES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES FOR OUR 80 DIFFERENT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS



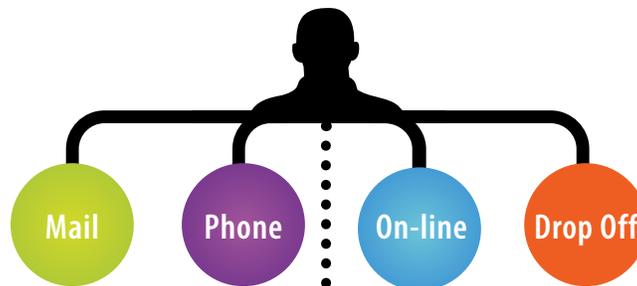
YOUR DONATIONS ARE VITAL TO OUR SUCCESS YEAR AFTER YEAR

...especially in programs like the Abbotsford Food Bank which receives no government funding at all. Many programs rely on your financial support and we want to thank you for supporting us these last 45 years. You are a partner with us in our work of helping others in our community.



GIVING IS EASY... BUT DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN ALSO LEAVE A LEGACY GIFT?

Also known as the 'bequest' this gift is simply the act of giving or leaving personal property or money through a will.



WHAT KEEPS ON **GIVING** YEAR AFTER YEAR

Legacy Gifts to ACS



left in your will

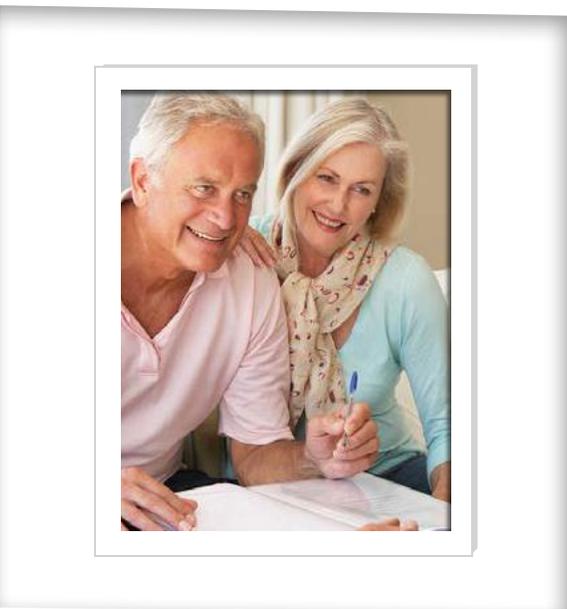
LEAVING A LEGACY GIFT TO ACS

FIRST THINGS FIRST

AFTER PROVIDING FOR YOUR FAMILY... PLEASE HELP US TAKE CARE OF OURS.

Your family and loved ones come first. Your will allows you to take care of them after you are gone.

You can also use your Will to help your extended community family at Abbotsford Community Services.



HOW TO LEAVE A LEGACY

There are many ways to leave a gift in your Will; specific amounts of cash or assets, make us a beneficiary of an RRSP or RRIF, through a gift of life insurance policies, and others.

But any of those decisions are for you to make without any involvement from us.

Seek professional advice from your lawyer, financial advisor or accountant. They know best how to handle these sensitive issues.

And please, if you have any questions about the financial stewardship of Abbotsford Community Services, feel free to contact us directly.

Leaving a bequest to Abbotsford Community Services is the simplest way to continue helping people.

To include us in your Will, it is essential to use the correct name and address, which is: Abbotsford Community Services 2420 Montrose Avenue Abbotsford, BC V2S 3S9

OUR PLEDGE TO YOU

When you leave a Legacy Gift to Abbotsford Community Services:

1. We respect your privacy. We do not share any of your personal information – ever.
2. We realize that your family and loved ones must come first.
3. We recognize that the decision to leave a gift in your Will to Abbotsford Community Services is your decision and yours alone, that you will make in your own time.
4. At any time in the future, you have the right to change your mind about a gift in your Will to Abbotsford Community Services.
5. We will handle your gift with sensitivity and utmost respect.



COMMUNITY BUILDERS AWARDS OF RECOGNITION

The Community Builder Recognition is awarded by the ACS Board of Directors to individuals who have made significant and meaningful contributions to our community.

In 2013 Abbotsford Community Services recognized Arlene Kropp and Dr. Ray Dyck.

2013

AWARDS



Arlene Kropp

Pictured here with longtime friend and ACS Board Member David Smith, Arlene Kropp served on the ACS Board of Directors, was instrumental in establishing the kindergarten program in Abbotsford, volunteers at Peardonville House and has been a dedicated financial supporter to various programs at ACS.

Thanks Arlene for being an inspiration to so many in our community!



Dr. Ray Dyck

Abbotsford dentist Dr. Ray Dyck was the impetus and the driving force behind establishing a free dental clinic at the ACS Food Bank.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts and support Ray!

REFLECTIONS of a PAST BOARD PRESIDENT

Dr. Virginia Cooke
ACS Board Member: 2001 - 2013



Describe ACS in 3 words:

- Far-reaching and comprehensive
- Compassionate people
- Significant

Why did you agree to become a member of the board?

When you reach a mature stage in your career or your life I believe it's important to choose worthwhile endeavors to be involved with. My greatest satisfaction has been that my time and my service have been for an agency that attempts to help as many people as possible.

Each time we (the board of directors) received a report from staff and learned about what was being done in so many different areas, I often felt these little flutters as I said to myself, 'Oh my, this is really important work.'

What I came to realize is that ACS aids people in self-discovery and helps them to take control of their lives. That of course results in a better and healthier community.

What should Board Members be?

- Open minded
- Willing to do their homework
- Have the ability to look at the issues and really care about them

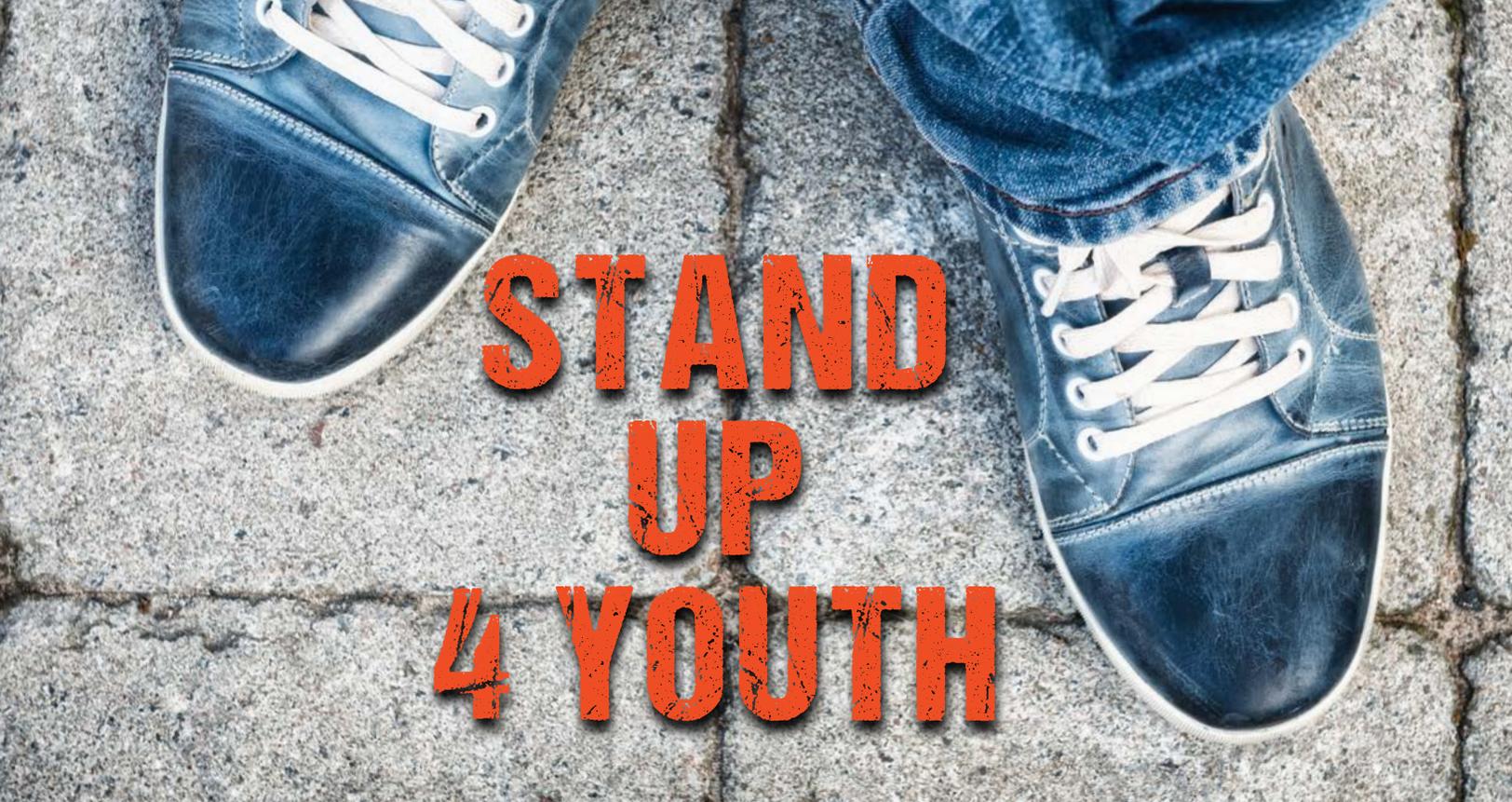
It's been a real gift to work with the ACS board members over the years. They have been thoughtful, passionate and humorous.

How do you feel about the direction and focus outlined for ACS in the next few years?

Well, so many things revolve around poverty or inequities in our society. ACS is trying to make a dent in a very significant and growing problem of disadvantaged populations. ACS is already doing this, but it's important to keep doing more because of the horrible outcomes of poverty and societal inequities.

Will you miss it?

Of course I'll miss being a member of the Board of Directors. It has meant a lot to me. But it's time to make way for new people with fresh perspectives to sit at that table and make a contribution. Having been a board member has satisfied my obligation to contribute to something that is so meaningful to this community.



STAND UP 4 YOUTH

Impassioned statements from those who work with our youth

The youth that we see at the Youth Health Centre have been placed in situations where they have had to grow up way too fast. We need to remember they are still kids. They need support, compassion and a place to feel comfortable getting help.

–Krista–

I know the importance of needing someone in your corner. It's important our youth know there are safe adults in their community, and that they can trust us to listen objectively and to help when and where we can.

–Beck–

Supporting our youth is an investment we can't afford not to make. Together we can help them prosper and meet their full potential.

–Casey–

Youth are the most important resource in our community. We must encourage and support them so that they are filled with hope for their future, the future of their families, and the future of the community they live in.

–Stan–

We have a social and moral responsibility to help support and raise our youth. If we don't the unhealthy influences of the streets will. Empower them to be themselves and love them no matter what.

–Angela–



BUILDING TRUST A KEY TO SUCCESS

The following story has been submitted by Sheila Lum – the Stop Exploiting Youth Worker at the Youth Resource Centre. The names & specific details have been changed to protect the identity of the youth involved.

AT 13 YEARS OF AGE Alicia became involved in the party scene and began drinking and using drugs. She and her friends started taking provocative 'selfies' (photos) of themselves and posting them on Facebook. They were partying with older people and Alicia started dating an older boyfriend. Things were not good between her and her boyfriend because he was violent and he made her do things that she was initially not comfortable with, like have sex with other men for money.

Alicia was then introduced to heroin by an older friend and became addicted. She was 'in love' with her boyfriend despite the way he treated her. He was always super nice to her after he'd been violent towards her and would buy her lots of presents to make her feel better.

Alicia lived this way for a long time and was couch surfing because she had nowhere to live. She would sometimes stay at her boyfriend's, but mostly she jumped from place to place with no real sense of home.

Through a referral, Alicia was connected with the SEY program at the Youth Resource Centre. While it took over a year for the SEY worker to connect with her, Alicia did eventually feel enough trust to begin acknowledging that she needed to make healthier choices for her life. She encountered some hurdles on her journey to establish a better life for herself. She identified that education

was important to her but her lifestyle was just too unstable for her first attempt at reentering school.

The same was true for housing. Alicia was successful at obtaining a youth agreement (through MCFD) but was not able to meet the requirements of the contract to keep her youth agreement and her housing. It was recognized by both the SEY worker and Alicia that she would have to work on her health and her drug use before she would be ready to successfully attend school and to have her own apartment.

Alicia attempted treatment, but it was not for her. Instead, through her own determination and will power, she became drug free on her own. She obtained another youth agreement, graduated high school, and is currently on an Agreement with Youth Adults with MCFD and is attending post-secondary education.

She is doing well and enjoying her schooling. Although it was not a straight forward journey to where Alicia is today, there were many little successes in between some of the backward steps. Because Alicia developed a trusting relationship with the SEY worker, she knew she could count on that person to be there even when she 'messed up'.

Alicia's determination and belief in a better life, along with the support of the SEY worker helped her to get to where she is today.

WE ARE **NOT** IMMUNE



Often with therapy things get worse before they get better, and with children it usually takes much longer than with adults. "What we hope for is that the child will realize that this thing has happened to them, but at the same time realize that not all people are bad so it's okay to relax. They no longer have to be constantly hyper-vigilant."

For Marissa and most of the abuse counsellors, seeing change in people is always exciting. It is always wonderful to see that a positive shift has taken place in either the children or the adults they work with. "When you notice that the person you've been working with is starting to see some meaning come out of the chaos they came in here with, well, that's a good day."

In the Sexual Abuse Intervention Program, ACS staff therapist Marissa works predominantly with children by using art and play therapy.

Young children (as young as 3 years of age) do not have the language or the cognitive ability to look at what's happened to them, how to explore their feelings or how to express their emotions.

"We see children and their families from every socio-economic background," says Marissa.

Even though we live in a city historically known as being the 'Bible Belt' of the lower mainland, Abbotsford residents need to realize we are not immune to the problem of the sexual exploitation of children.

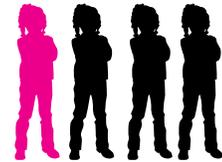
"You may think everyone in your neighborhood is a good neighbor,

or that everyone in your church is a good, upright person. But we need to accept the fact that we are not immune to the problem."

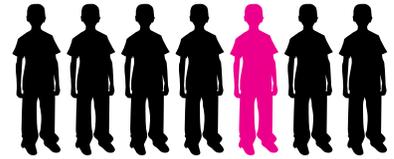
If a child does not receive the help they need to deal with their experiences of abuse, in most cases, it will continue to plague their lives. It might manifest itself through addictions, perfectionism, an eating disorder, mental illness or the extreme need to control things.

"Our goal in this program," adds Marissa, "is to give children (and young teens) a place where there is room for them to bring up and play out whatever they need to, so that what has happened can be 'integrated' into their life instead of 'splicing off' this piece of themselves. Yes, it is still terrible and awful and may continue to come at different times of their life, but it is no longer this 'no-go' place in their brain."

1 OUT OF EVERY 4



1 OUT OF EVERY 7



... will experience some sort of sexual misconduct or inappropriate touching

BEFORE 18 YRS

Searching for the Truth



Submitted by: C.B.
Edited for Length

As I reflect back upon my life I can see the profound truth in my story. It is a story of survival, courage, strength and love. Growing up I was determined not to become a statistic. I refused to believe the lie, 'that you are what you come from.'

I have never met my father and was raised by my mother who has been a drug addict and prostitute for the majority of my life. She was the example of what not to do.

I was raised to be the caretaker in our home and to place everyone else's feelings before my own. Being the oldest of three, having a younger brother and sister, the responsibility for them was placed on me at the age of 12. The situation that we children lived in was deplorable to say the least. At 14 I left home. My siblings were two years of age at the time, but it wasn't until they were nine that they were finally removed from my mother's care after I testified against her as to the conditions they lived in.

I completed high school and graduated with honors. Preceding my graduation year I met my first spouse with whom I had my first son at the age of sixteen, and then my second son at 19. My spouse was extremely physically, sexually and emotionally abusive and I knew I had to find a way out.

I attended college and raised my two boys as a single mom on a minimum wage. I was hired immediately after graduating college.

Abbotsford Community Services provided me with abuse counselling. I wanted to learn how not to be subject to that kind of abuse ever again.

After 5 years of being with my second spouse I gave birth to our daughter. But I noticed things had started to change and not for the better. After struggling for three years I asked him to leave. Six months later my children began to open up and tell me what had been going on. I could not have possibly prepared myself for what they were about to tell me.

My sons described the most horrific and humiliating acts of abuse. I also found out that he had been sexually molesting our three year old daughter.

It was in my children's time of need that I failed them the most. Instead of supporting them I was selfish. Something broke inside; I believed the lie and gave up. I turned to drugs to numb the pain. I ended up sending my sons back to their father. The Ministry of Children and Family Development was already investigating me and it was at that time that I admitted I was powerless and turned my daughter over to them voluntarily.

Eventually I lost everything and ended up sleeping on the street. It was at the darkest moment of my life when I was close to suicide that I felt God touch my heart.

Eventually I straightened myself out enough to get into a treatment center. I completed every course and counselling option MCFD offered me. I didn't see these as hoops to jump through but as opportunities to get the help I needed in order to build a successful future for myself and my children. I was finally able to find a home, get a job and once my daughter came home, we both attended counselling for the following year individually and together.

Even though my children have never seen justice in a courtroom, we have experienced something far more than justice can offer. And I finally have the opportunity to be the parent I always wanted to be.

The greatest thing I have learned is that it doesn't matter how broken you think you are, there is restoration. Sometimes you even end up with something more beautiful than what you started with.

If not for the help and tools that I have received from the Abuse Counselling Program at Abbotsford Community Services and my faith, I doubt I would have achieved as much as I have. And for that I would like to express my sincerest gratitude.

IT HAPPENS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF YOUTH

TERMS:

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION:

the exchange of a sexual act for money, drugs, food, shelter, transportation, love, acceptance or any other consideration. Sexual exploitation of children and youth is not a female specific issue. Males and transgendered youth are also sexually exploited.

The ACS Youth Resource Centre staff see many different forms of youth sexual exploitation.

PIMPS

(often in the form of an older 'boyfriend') who groom youth by buying them new clothing, purses, nails, or giving them a place to stay

ADULTS BUYING SEX FROM YOUTH,

which can be anyone in the community including middle class family men

ADULTS HARBORING

YOUTH in their homes, then make them sell themselves to help pay for rent and food

PEER-TO-PEER EXPLOITATION

where a peer be-friends a youth in order to groom them for the trade

ONLINE

knowingly advertising themselves and through texting also known as 'sexting'. (Sending nude photos of yourself or others who are under 16) is considered 'distribution of images of child sexual abuse' and it is illegal.)

HOW PREVALENT IS IT

The numbers for North America is estimated at anywhere between 100,000 to 300,000 youth.

"We are unsure of the numbers for Abbotsford, but we estimate that around 100 youth have been or are being sexually exploited," says Sheila Lum, the Stop Exploiting Youth (SEY) worker at the ACS Youth Resource Centre.

"Unfortunately there is no way to provide clear or accurate numbers of sexually exploited youth in our community. The hard part with this is that if the youth is not identified as being at risk of being sexually exploited, then there is no way of knowing.

Sexual exploitation happens behind closed doors, so it is pretty hard to identify who is being sexually exploited."

SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS:

New items or cash they can't get on their own

Online "chatting" with adult men

Increase in drug and alcohol use

Having an older **boyfriend**

Taking provocative "selfies" / posting online

COMMON RISK FACTORS:

Victim (sexual, physical, or emotional abuse)

Lack of security or sense of belonging

Isolated and disconnected from social support

Lack of family and **social bonds**

Dropping out of school

Low self-esteem

Poverty (+ increasing feminization of poverty)

WHAT IF YOU SUSPECT:

Check out www.saferself.ca

Contact the Youth Resource Centre's – Sexual Exploitation or Youth worker @ 604.859.7681 Local: 309

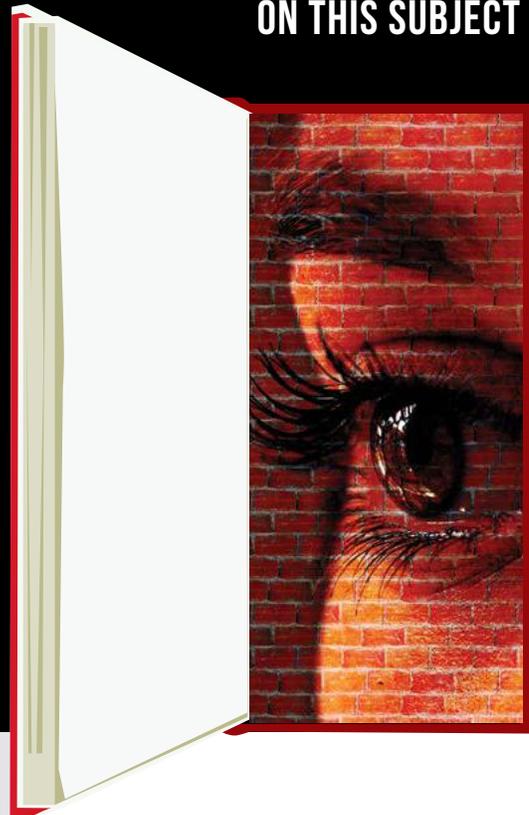
Be non-judgmental and maintain a positive relationship with that youth. (If youth feel they are being judged in any way, they may grow farther and farther from you.)

Have empathy and compassion; be one of the healthy individuals they feel connected to

Have persistence; be the one that they can rely on no matter what

Help them to believe and see that a good life is possible for them by instilling hope

OPENING UP AND... SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON THIS SUBJECT



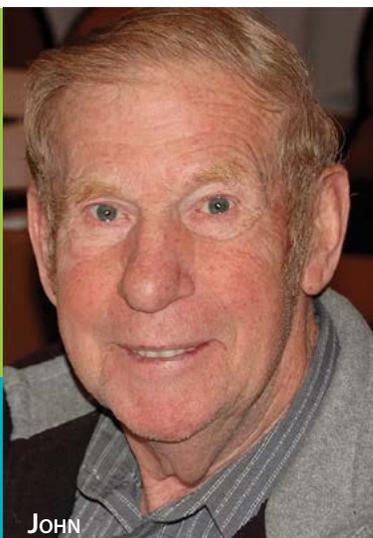
APPROACH TO WORKING WITH YOUTH

"Most of the youth I work with do not know they are being sexually exploited. I begin by establishing a trusting relationship with them and in some cases that's all I can do," says Lum.

"For others it means building that trusting relationship in order to get them connected to other community resources, such as MCFD, the Abbotsford Youth Health Center, drug and alcohol counselling, victim services, or the Abbotsford Police Department."

"I also make sure I don't expect too much too quickly. Change takes time and these youth have to be ready and willing to make positive steps. All I do is guide them and be there for them."

FEATURED VOLUNTEER



JOHN

People volunteer in our community for all kinds of reasons. And they do all kinds of jobs. Jobs that are important. Jobs that really make a difference.

Here's just a few examples of the type of jobs some of our volunteers handle.

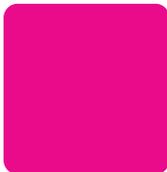
1. Help others with reading, writing or math skills: Art, Connie And Don
2. Driving people to medical appointments outside of Abbotsford: Mel and Sandy
3. Assisting with administrative duties in Seniors Programming: Ilene



CONNIE



ART



DON



ILENE



MEL



SANDY



John has been delivering Meals on Wheels every Tuesday for the last almost ten years. At 82 years of age he is a grandfather and a great-grandfather. And he has finally decided to 'hang up the keys' so to speak.

But he is not likely to forget one particular Tuesday any time soon. He had been delivering meals to Ron for almost eight years so he'd become very familiar with Ron's routines.

Normally he would find Ron sitting in his favorite living room recliner watching the Price is Right on television. But when he rang the unit's buzzer on the condominium call box, Ron didn't respond.

John finally managed to get into the building only to find Ron lying on the floor beside his bed partially dressed. John quickly realized the situation as a medical emergency and called 911. Paramedics arrived and took Ron to the hospital.

Ron had had a very deep, dense stroke. Living on his own with very few outside connections, Ron could have laid there for hours or even days before someone had come to check on him. Thankfully he's doing much better now, maybe even watching the Price is Right again.

Meals on Wheels is very often much more than just about food. It is about people helping people. It is about volunteers who make a connection with others and take a few minutes to check in on them to ensure everything is alright.

Thank you John for your many years of dedicated volunteer service!

FEATURED VOLUNTEER



DIANA

Diana has volunteered for the last 15 years by coordinating senior participation in the Lunch with the Bunch program. Lunch with the Bunch provides activities, guest speakers and an enjoyable nutritious meal in the company of other seniors every Monday.

"In a word," says Nancy Deba coordinator of both Lunch with the Bunch and Meals on Wheels, "Diana is dedicated. She offers true dedication to the task and she is very, very caring".

Despite her disability – Diana suffers from Epilepsy – she participates every Monday in the program doing what she can. And every Wednesday afternoon, she comes in to the ACS office and makes calls to each participant. She loves the seniors who come and they love her just as much.

Thank you Diana for your amazing volunteer efforts!

THANK YOU

volunteers

FOR LENDING A HAND AND
SHARING YOUR TIME AND
TALENT WITH THOSE
MOST IN NEED



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